

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 00594 01 OF 02 292159Z

67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 SPC-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10 RSC-01

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COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06

SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 L-03 H-03 FEA-02

INT-08 SCI-06 DRC-01 /199 W
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R 291856Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9756

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BRUSSELS 0594

STATE ALSO FOR T/IEP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, EFIN, EEC, BE, XF

SUBJECT: VAN ELSLANDE PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: BRUSSELS 556, PARA 2

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE, IN JANUARY
29 PRESS CONFERENCE, LEVELED STRONG CRITICISM AT RECENT
SELFISH ACTIONS ON PART OF INDIVIDUAL EC MEMBERS,
PARTICULARLY FRENCH AND BRITISH, AND DREW GLOOMY
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 00594 01 OF 02 292159Z

CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF EC COHESIVENESS. VAN

ELSLANDE DISCUSSED THE MIDDLE EAST, ENERGY, ECONOMIC AND MONETARY PROBLEMS, EC REGIONAL POLICY, AND POLITICAL COOPERATION. ON LAST POINT, HE CRITICIZED THE EC NINE FOR ITS INABILITY TO AGREE ON THE NATURE OF FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE US. VAN ELSLANDE SAID THAT BELGIANS HAD SOUGHT AND FAILED TO CONVENE A EXTRA-ORDINARY EC COUNCIL MEETING FOLLOWING THE FRENCH FLOAT, AND THAT HE INTENDS TO DEMAND A POLITICAL DEBATE ON RECENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS AT THE JANUARY 30 COUNCIL MEETING. FOLLOWING ARE PARAPHRASED OR QUOTED PORTIONS OF VAN ELSLANDE'S REMARKS. END SUMMARY.

2. INTRODUCTION. BELGIUM HAS NOT LOST FAITH IN THE COMMUNITY AND IT CONTINUES TO CONSIDER THE EUROPEAN OPTION AS THE BASIS OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY. IN VIEW OF RECENT EVENTS, HOWEVER, CERTAIN STEPS MUST BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO RELAUNCH EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION. EVEN THOUGH THE EC IS JUST AT THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIFICATION PROCESS, ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT IT WAS CAPABLE OF REACTING TO EXTERNAL PRESSURE IN A WAY THAT WOULD PERMIT NEW PROGRESS. THIS SUPPOSITION HAS BEEN DISPROVED.

3. THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AND ENERGY. THE EUROPEANS WAITED UNTIL NOVEMBER 6 BEFORE TAKING A POLITICAL POSITION EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION DEMANDED MORE RAPID ACTION. THIS EXPLAINS THE LACK OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. THEN, EUROPEANS HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THE COPENHAGEN SUMMIT BEFORE DEMONSTRATING THEIR DESIRE TO DEVELOP A COMMON ENERGY POLICY. "EVEN THIS MODEST APPROACH WAS BLOCKED BY THE DESIRE OF GREAT BRITAIN TO HAVE NO COMMUNITY PROGRESS AS LONG AS THE QUESTION OF REGIONAL POLICY WAS NOT RESOLVED." WHILE THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION FOR THE UK IS UNDERSTOOD, THIS PROCEDURE IN PRINCIPLE IS UNACCEPTABLE, AND THE IMAGE GIVEN THE COMMUNITY IS DISTRESSING. WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO MEMBER STATES NEGOTIATING INDIVIDUALLY FOR THEIR ENERGY SUPPLY, BUT IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT IT WAS NOT DONE IN THE COMMUNITY

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BRUSSE 00594 01 OF 02 292159Z

FRAMEWORK. AS IT IS, SOME MEMBER STATES ARE ACQUIRING ADVANTAGES AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS. "IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO KNOW HOW EUROPE WILL CONDUCT ITSELF IN WASHINGTON."

4. MONETARY AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE BRITISH AND ITALIAN DECISIONS WERE A HARD BLOW TO THE MONETARY COHESION OF THE COMMUNITY. LAST WEEK'S

FRENCH DECISION CONSTITUTES A NEW SETBACK FOR THE COMMUNITY AND IS AT VARIANCE WITH THE POLITICAL DECISION TAKEN ON DECEMBER 17 WITH REGARD TO EC CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO TAKING NEW STEPS IN THE MONETARY AREA. THE FRENCH HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE A SOLUTION TO THEIR PROBLEMS CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, A POSITION CONFIRMED IN THE RECENT STATEMENT BY POMPIDOU: " OUR FIRST DECISION WAS TO FREE OUR HANDS AND BE READY TO REACT TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES". THE CREDIBILITY OF THE MONETARY UNION IS QUESTIONABLE WHEN ONLY FIVE STATES CONTINUE TO ADHERE TO COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES.

5. REGIONAL POLICY. BELGIUM HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT EC SOLIDARITY AND ECONOMIC UNION IS POSSIBLE ONLY IF THE COMMUNITY COMES TO THE AID OF LESS FAVORED REGIONS. NO AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED, HOWEVER, BECAUSE AT ONE TIME THE FRENCH AND AT ANOTHER TIME OTHER STATES JUDGE THAT PROPOSALS UNDER DISCUSSION ARE UNFAVORABLE FROM A NATIONAL POINT OF VIEW.

6. POLITICAL COOPERATION. SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN CONCERTING THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF MEMBER STATES, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO POSITIONS TAKEN ON CSCE. THIS IS NOT SUCH A DIFFICULT PROBLEM, BUT WE DO ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTY WHEN WE ADDRESS A PROBLEM SUCH AS RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE US.

"ALL OF THE NINE ARE AGREED ON THE FACT THAT A DIALOGUE WITH THE US CAN TAKE PLACE ONLY ON AN EQUAL FOOTING AND ON THE BASIS OF A EUROPEAN POSITION THAT TAKES ITS OWN IDENTITY INTO ACCOUNT. BUT WHY, WITH THIS RESULT OBTAINED, CAN AGREEMENT NOT BE REACHED ON DEFINING THE MODALITIES OF FUTURE COLLABORATION

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 BRUSSE 00594 01 OF 02 292159Z

BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN ENTITY AND THE US. OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO DEFINE LASTING RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN PARTNER ON THIS NEW BASE AND NOT TO MOVE OURSELVES AWAY FROM IT (THE US) AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE."

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 00594 02 OF 02 292205Z

67

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BRUSSELS 0594

STATE ALSO FOR T/IEP

7. CONCLUSIONS. THE EC IS IN A GRAVE CRISIS BECAUSE CERTAIN ESSENTIAL RULES HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN: (A) COMMUNITY LAW MUST BE APPLIED IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES AND NOT ONLY WHEN ONE FINDS IT IN HIS INTEREST: (B) THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE ADVANTAGES OBTAINED CAN ONLY BE ESTABLISHED GLOBALLY AND NOT SECTORALLY: (C) WHEN DECISIONS MUST BE TAKEN, THE MINORITY MUST RALLY TO THE MAJORITY. IF THE MINORITY REFUSES TO TAKE A DECISION UNTIL THE MAJORITY RALLIES TO ITS POINT OF VIEW, THE
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 00594 02 OF 02 292205Z

COMMUNITY INSTITUTION IS BLOCKED.

8. "IT IS PREFERABLE TO SPEAK FRANKLY THAN TO PERSIST IN PRESENTING MINIMAL PROGRESS AS DECISIVE STEPS ON THE ROAD TO EUROPEAN UNIFICATION. UNDER THESE

CONDITIONS, IT SEEMS ESSENTIAL THUS TO AGREE THAT IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE TRUE PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION AS LONG AS WE LEAVE ASIDE THE PROBLEM OF MONETARY RESERVES, INCLUDING THE PROBLEM OF GOLD, AND THAT OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR MONETARY UNION OF THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICITS PROVOKED BY THE HEAVY INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF ENERGY.... IN THE AREA OF ENERGY WE MUST ESTABLISH THE GENUINE RULES OF A COMMON ENERGY MARKET AND ON THIS BASE DEFINE A FOREIGN POLICY THE RULES OF WHICH WILL APPLY TO ALL."

9. " I AM PERSUADED THAT FOR THE MEMBER STATES OF THE COMMUNITY THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE EUROPEAN OPTION. NATIONAL PROTECTIONS ARE RIDICULOUS BEFORE THE DANGERS THAT FACE US. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE PROPOSE THAT THE NINE MEMBER STATES, THE COMMISSION AND THE PRESIDENCY PROCEED TOGETHER TO A FUNDAMENTAL EXAMINATION OF THE SITUATION, IN ORDER TO FACE THE PRIORITIES REQUIRED BY THE NEW SITUATION, TO SUBSCRIBE TO NEW UNDERTAKINGS AND TO MAKE FROM THERE A NEW BEGINNING."

10. REPLYING TO QUESTIONS AFTER MAKING HIS STATEMENT, VAN ELSLANDE SAID THAT BELGIUM HAD REQUESTED BUT FAILED TO GET AGREEMENT ON A COUNCIL MEETING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FRENCH FLOAT. HE SAID THAT BELGIUM NOW WANTS TO OPEN A POLITICAL DEBATE ON RECENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS AND INTENDS TO BEGIN THAT DEBATE AT THE JANUARY 30 COUNCIL MEETING. VAN ELSLANDE SAID THAT BELGIUM HAD NOT CONSULTED ON THIS WITH OTHER MEMBER STATES ALTHOUGH SOME ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH BELGIUM'S POSITION. WHEN ASKED WHETHER BELGIUM WOULD BLOCK COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IF IT IS UNABLE TO GENERATE THE DESIRED DEBATE, VAN ELSLANDE SAID THAT THE TEMPTATION WILL BE GREAT BUT THAT HE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 00594 02 OF 02 292205Z

DOES NOT BELIEVE THE NINE WILL REFUSE TO BEGIN DISCUSSION. FINALLY, VAN ELSLANDE SAID THAT THE EC COMMISSION TENDS INCREASINGLY TO SEEK COMPROMISES RATHER THAN TO FORMULATE PROPOSALS. THUS, HE SAID, THE COMMISSION IS DUPLICATING THE WORK OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES.

11. COPIES OF VAN ELSLANDE'S STATEMENT BEING POUCHED TO EUR/WE AND EUR/RPE.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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